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The Northeast Utilities System

October 1, 2001
NA #010248

The Honorable Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W. 7A-257
Washington, D.C. 20585

Subject: Possible Site Recommendation for Yucca Mountain

Dear Mr. Secretary:

North Atlantic Energy Service Corporation operates Seabrook Station; a nuclear powered electrical generating plant located in Seabrook, New Hampshire. As managing agent of this facility on behalf of its eleven joint owner companies, we have actively followed the Department of Energy's progress on key milestones for a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel. Along with all of the nation's nuclear power plants, we have provided significant funding over the years to support this work, so we have a vested financial interest in the outcome. More importantly, however, we have increasingly recognized the negative impacts of delays in providing a repository. The uncertainty associated with a permanent resolution of the nation's spent fuel storage needs continues to erode public confidence in a vital portion of the nation's energy infrastructure and unnecessarily increases current and projected costs for interim storage.

All who have followed this issue even casually cannot help but recognize the extraordinary effort that has now brought us to the point where you will soon be called upon to make a decision on whether or not to recommend the Yucca Mountain site for development as the permanent repository. The Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management's issuance earlier this year of the Yucca Mountain Science and Engineering Report and, more recently, the Yucca Mountain Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation are ample evidence of the scope and extensive detail of the evaluations to date. In response to the public comment period announced in May (66 FR 23013, May 7, 2001) and August (66 FR 45845, August 21, 2001), the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) has submitted comments on behalf of the nuclear energy industry strongly supporting a decision to recommend Yucca Mountain for development as a repository. We support the NEI comment letter and encourage you to recommend Yucca Mountain for development as a permanent repository.

Very truly yours,

Ted C. Feigenbaum
Executive Vice President
and Chief Nuclear Officer

DCM/TCF:bes

cc: Ms. Carol Hanlon -- U.S. Department of Energy